

# Religious Education PREP Newsletter

Issue: July 2021 St. Mary Magdalen Church



Planes, trains, and automobiles! It looks like everyone is so happy to be able to travel again that we're all going on vacation together!

I was very blessed as a child; my dad was on the board of a group called the National Retail Hardware Association. Every summer, the Association had a convention in a different city, and since Dad had to go, it became our family vacation. As a result, we got to go many places we never would have otherwise. Portland, Seattle, San Diego, Atlanta, St. Louis – even Philadelphia (yes, even though we lived 20 miles away it was really a lot of fun!) Those are wonderful memories, and my very best friend from New York came from those days; her dad was on the board with mine!

One thing I always remember about our vacations is that the first thing my parents did on arrival was check with the hotel concierge. Why, you ask? They wanted to know where the closest Catholic church was and what time the masses were, if the hotel had mass celebrated there, etc. They wanted us to know that our faith was important, no matter where we were, and that while we might vacation from work, we could never vacation from God.

I know it isn't always easy, and sometimes the timing of masses doesn't work out. But there are ways you can keep the faith alive, even if you can't make it to mass! Our Sunday Visitor, a Catholic publisher that began when a priest started writing down basic info on the Catholic faith for people who were asking, has a book called "Monuments, Marvels and Miracles: A Traveler's Guide to Catholic America." So while you might not be able to make it to mass, maybe you can visit a shrine, or a grand cathedral as part of your trip. As always, YOU are the first and best catechist for your children; if they know it's important to you, it will be important to them! Happy travels!

*Karen Yasik*



Hard to believe, I know, but PREP has come into the 21<sup>st</sup> century! You can now sign up for PREP **and** pay online! Just go to the parish website [here](#) and you can sign up to 4 children without having to repeat all the same information! It's a miracle LOL! Pay by the end of the month to avoid a \$25 late fee (assessed after July 31<sup>st</sup> so don't be late!)

## TOP TEN CITIES OF FAITH

(from Monuments, Marvels and Miracles)

10. **Denver** – Buffalo Bill prayed at the Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception; the Mother Cabrini shrine nearby holds a miraculous spring, and the nearby Leadville Annunciation Catholic Church has a steeple that is the highest in the country (11,000 feet!)
9. **Atlanta** – the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception withstood the Civil War
8. **Portland** – The Grotto is famous for its five-story tall grotto to our Lady, and at Rockaway Beach St. Mary by the Sea is built like a ship!
7. **Sacramento** – "America's most Irish church" is St. Patrick's here, not in NY!
6. **New Orleans** – Our Lady of Prompt Succor saved the Ursuline convent from burning in the Great Fire in 1788
5. **St. Louis** – shrines abound in this area, from St. Joseph to Our Lady of the Snows
4. **San Antonio/Santa Fe** – home to many mission churches, this area also has the famous floating staircase believed to have been built by St. Joseph himself!
3. **Milwaukee** – America's oldest church, the Chapel of St. Joan of Arc, built 1420 and moved here in 1920
2. **New York** – St. Malachy's is the Actor's chapel where many famous Catholics like Spencer Tracy attended mass
1. **Baltimore** – nearby Emmitsburg has a shrine and grotto of Elizabeth Ann Seton

For links to all the cities see [here](#)

# DID YOU KNOW?

## INTERESTING THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT OUR FAITH

Every day, I get a variety of emails from different publishers. The one I really enjoy started out being called “Catholic Snacks – bite-sized things to know about your faith” and then they changed it to “Get Fed – Bite-Sized Faith” Here are two of their posts!

### St. Joseph’s Staircase

(see the San Antonio/Santa Fe City of Faith!)

In 1873, construction on the Chapel of Our Lady of Light in New Mexico hit a roadblock. The beautiful gothic style chapel had no staircase to get from the main level to the choir loft. The original architect had died, and his plans for a staircase were unknown.

The sisters of Loreto, who had commissioned the chapel, were distraught. They consulted with several architects and carpenters, but the answer was always the same: it couldn’t be done. There just wasn’t enough space to build a staircase to the choir loft. They were going to have to accept that they couldn’t access the choir loft. Not quite ready to give up, the sisters said a novena to St. Joseph, the master carpenter, asking him to help them find a builder with a solution. As soon as the sisters finished the novena, a man arrived at their doorstep saying that could build them a staircase—his only request was to work in complete privacy. The sisters agreed, and the man locked himself in the chapel to work. Some say it only took him one night, while others say it took months. However long it took to build, the staircase the man crafted for the sisters was nothing short of incredible.

The man departed just as mysteriously as he had arrived, leaving behind one of the most marvelous pieces of woodworking ever seen. The staircase has two 360-degree spirals in it and was built with no central support, resting only on its base. It was built without nails—just wood pegs. Carpenters and scientists have said that the construction is nearly impossible and shouldn’t be able to support anyone walking on it. Yet the staircase stands solid to this day.

### Mary in the United States?

In October 1859, 28-year-old Adele experienced her first vision near the area now called New Franken, Wisconsin. Adele saw a woman bathed in a bright light and dressed in white, a yellow sash, and a crown of stars. Unsure and frightened, Adele prayed until the vision disappeared. The following Sunday, the lady appeared again on Adele’s way to Mass. Adele immediately consulted with her priest, who advised that she should ask the woman, “In the Name of God, who are you and what do you wish of me?” Adele saw the apparition a third time on her way home from Mass the same day. Mary told her: “I am the Queen of Heaven, who prays for the conversion of sinners, and I wish you to do the same.” Our Lady then gave Adele the mission to “gather the children in this wild country and teach them what they should know for salvation.”

From that time onward, Adele dedicated her life to catechetical mission work. Adele’s father built a small twelve-foot chapel, where many pilgrims visited and prayed for Our Lady’s intercession. Twelve years after Adele first encountered the Blessed Mother, a great drought beset the Midwest, causing the Peshtigo Fire, the worst recorded fire in U.S. history. As the fire approached Robinsonville, local families that Adele had served came together at the chapel grounds with their children and livestock to pray the Rosary, beseeching Our Lady to ask Jesus to save them. They prayed through the night—and while the fire destroyed the surrounding land, the chapel area and all who had gathered there remained untouched.

This became the first of many miraculous occurrences through Our Lady of Good Help’s intercession. In 1942, a new church was constructed at the site. Devotion to Our Lady of Good Help flourished. In 2010, after much time and discernment by expert Mariologists, the Church formally pronounced Mary’s appearances to Adele as “worthy of belief.” The church constructed at the site was later designated as the [National Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help](#), making it the first and only shrine with a Church-approved Marian apparition site in the USA.

### Which Catholic signed the Declaration of Independence?

Charles Carroll, cousin of America’s first bishop, John Carroll, was the only Catholic, from the state named after the Blessed Mother – “Mary-land.” He was the last surviving signer of the Declaration when he died in Baltimore in 1832 at the grand age of 95.